

Globally Harmonized System

What is it?

The Globally Harmonized System is a hazard communication initiative of the United Nations, recently adopted by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and scheduled for Army-wide implementation by June 2016. The GHS standardizes the classification and labeling of hazardous chemicals, regardless of location or country of origin, and streamlines the format of safety data sheets (previously material safety data sheets).

What has Army Safety done?

In accordance with OSHA and Department of Defense guidelines, the Army will train all personnel on the changes mandated by the GHS before full implementation begins. Leaders and supervisors have until Dec. 1, 2013, to ensure their personnel are trained to standard on new labeling and SDS requirements.

The U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center has developed several awareness tools to assist commands with the GHS transition, including a training support package that contains a lesson plan, training presentation, supporting reference materials and train-the-trainer video. The package, along with multimedia products such as articles and posters, may be found at <https://safety.army.mil>.

What does Army Safety have planned for the future?

The USACR/Safety Center will continue to provide guidance and support to the field as all Army organizations integrate the GHS into their existing hazard communication programs.

Why is this important to the Army?

The Army is a standards-based organization, and leaders are responsible for ensuring their Soldiers and Civilian personnel are aware of not only the risks posed by hazardous materials, but also measures to mitigate adverse effects. The GHS is a proven and effective hazard communication tool that will benefit the safety of Army personnel working with a wide range of chemicals.

Resources:

USACR/Safety Center home page:

<https://safety.army.mil>

OSHA GHS information page:

<http://www.osha.gov/dsg/hazcom/ghs.html>